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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/736,180	12/15/2003	Steven P. Buysse	2081 CON 2 CIP CON	4369
50855	7590	01/09/2006		
UNITED STATES SURGICAL, A DIVISION OF TYCO HEALTHCARE GROUP LP 150 GLOVER AVENUE NORWALK, CT 06856			EXAMINER	
			GIBSON, ROY DEAN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3739	

DATE MAILED: 01/09/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/736,180	BUYSSSE ET AL.	
	Examiner Roy D. Gibson	Art Unit 3739	

– The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address –
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 October 2005.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-15 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-15 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-2, 4-5 and 13-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mulier et. al. in view of Yates et al. (US H2037 H).

Mulieret al. disclose a bipolar electrosurgical instrument essentially as claimed (Figure 6) except for a stop for maintaining a separation distance between the opposable seal surfaces and the specific range of closure pressure of about 7-13 kg/cm² (col. 7, lines 29-42).

As to the lack of disclosure of a stop member, the examiner maintains that it would have been obvious to a skillful artisan to recognize that shorting would occur between the opposable seal surfaces if they make contact while the RF energy is applied. Therefore, such a stop member provides additional safety to avoid this contingency.

As to the range of closure pressure, Yates et al. disclose an electrosurgical hemostatic device wherein the range of closure pressure for forming a required tissue seal is 30 – 250 psi (30 psi is 10.2 kg/cm² and therefore, overlaps the claimed range: see col. 3, lines 20-29 and col. 4, lines 27-35). Therefore, at the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of Mulier

et al., as taught by Yates et al., to provide a closure pressure at about 30 psi (10.2 kg/cm²) to provide an appropriate seal pressure to tissue.

Claims 6-12 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mulier et al. and Yates et al. as applied to claim 6 above and further in view of Treat et al. (6,860,880). Neither Mulier et al. nor Yates et al. disclose the opposable seal surfaces include a non-stick material for reducing tissue adhesion. But, Treat et al. disclose an instrument for sealing tissue wherein the opposable seal surfaces include a non-stick material such as nichrome or an alloy thereof for such a purpose (col. 17, lines 1-11). Therefore, at the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of Mulier et al., as taught by Treat et al., to provide the additional advantage of a non-stick material or coating for reducing tissue adhesion.

Further to claim 11, the examiner maintains that it would have been obvious to manufacture the stop from an (electrically) insulative material.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Roy D. Gibson whose telephone number is 571-272-4767. The examiner can normally be reached on Tu-Th, 7:30 am-4:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Linda Dvorak can be reached on 571-272-4764. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>.

Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the
Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free)



Roy D. Gibson
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3739

January 4, 2006